

pears however to have some strong scriptural supports. Besides this it possesses the strongest attractions to the mind and heart. Even in the few short years of our earthly tribulation we grow so utterly weary of it all, so weary of the world's sin and selfishness, so impatient of the long record of wickedness and despair, so indignant at the frequent spectacles of cruelty and injustice, that we yearn for the day to speedily come when it shall all be brought to an end. We say: How quickly I would end it all if it were put in my power.

But the end has been in God's power since the beginning. Yea the beginning was in his power. He could have ordained that there should be no beginning of sin and sorrow. Why did he let it begin? Why doesn't he end it? Why hasn't he ended it long ago? Why that futile flood which was merely an interval between the wickedness that went before and the wickedness that came after? Who can answer these questions? But we must believe that infinite wisdom and infinite love are behind all this mystery and puzzle, and that God patiently suffers this evil world and all its evil generations, its evil ages, its evil cycles, *for the sake of what will one day grow out of it.* You and I would wind it up in a hurry, and in that perfectly natural and human impulse is probably founded much of the conviction that God will wind it up in a hurry. In this way we can easily put upon symbolical scriptures an interpretation dictated by our inclinations.

From several directions we are beginning to get more light upon God's ways. For example, literalists used to believe that the world was created in six days of twenty four hours each, which according to Bible chronology could not have been quite six thousand years ago. Science has shattered all this mistaken conception, and proved beyond cavil, not that the Bible account is wrong, but that our understanding of that narrative, our literal construction of it, is wrong. A little spring has deposited in a wide and deep mountain gorge, less than a mile from my house, certainly not less than twenty millions tons of marl. Any school boy can measure its immense bulk and calculate its weight. Anyone can observe the process of precipitation in the gradual incrustation of stones and limbs of trees that are exposed to the action of the water. At the rate of a thousand pounds precipitation a year, which is a liberal estimate, too much in fact, this little stream has been flowing here for at least forty millions of years. At one point where this mountain of marl has broken away, exposing its foundations, distinct orifices and cavities appear which enclosed limbs of trees that in that far away time, millions of years ago, had fallen into the stream, and were first slowly encrusted with the marl, and eventually built into the solid mass, even as we see the same process going on today. Here we have the testimony of the rocks that many millions of years gone by vegetable growth flourished on this earth, yet a

literal construction of the Genesis account fixes the creation of the vegetable kingdom only a few thousand years ago.

The stupendous age, not merely of the geological world, but of the vegetable and animal, of the ancestry of man himself, is written in the coal measures, in the rocks, in the stalagmites of caves, in numberless places and in numberless ways, showing the millions upon millions of years of God's patience with an imperfect world, growing however, as the slow ages drag along, more and more out of the imperfect toward the perfect. This certainly seems to be God's way in nature. All eternity is before him. It is nothing in his sight to occupy a hundred million years in building a world, or half that time in developing a constantly higher form of life in that world. Will he employ a different method in the development of spiritual life? Will he suddenly jerk an imperfect moral into a perfectly moral world? Does that seem to be his way? Is it reasonable and philosophical? Is it scriptural? I wish it was. I wish he would do it tomorrow. I wish he would do it today.

I haven't space in this article to notice much that Brother Cassel says in his last. He talks of "interpretations of scripture," as if a literalist could have any interpretations. He performs a surgical operation upon that word "draw" in the Saviour's prediction that I have never seen excelled. As an exhibition of skill in "explaining away the plain scriptures" it cannot be beat, and I am unable to withhold my admiration. He talks of liars, adulterers, immoral church members and a general assortment of riff-raff as having been drawn to Christ. Indeed he says a great deal which tends to convince the reader that after all "the best of men are nothing but a pack of error." It is a great pity. We would like to feel that at least in some things a good man may be right.

Finally brethren does it matter much whether we know much or little about God's plans for the future? A merciful provision of his providence removes us, in a very short time, from an imperfect world. Who knoweth the manner of that going? I once stood by the bedside of a dying young Christian who undoubtedly felt himself flying thru the skies and with his last breath shouted; Up! Up! Up! As that exulting shout rang in my ears, I said to myself; "Caught up to meet the Lord in the air." Who knows? There has already been a pre-millennial advent for the millions of God's people who have passed away, and there will probably be a pre millennial advent and glory for God's people who are now alive and remain. To some it will come shortly, to others another day. It is with that change and that alone that we are concerned. He who is ready for the summons which came to our fathers will not be unready should his eyes suddenly behold the descending Lord, coming in the clouds of heaven.

"HUNTING HERETICS AND SAVING MEN"

E. H. SMITH

The above was a subject discussed several years ago in the Homiletic Review, and as it serves as a starting point for what I want to say in this, I use it as a head-line.

I know the former is not, and should not be the primary object of the church of Jesus Christ but the latter should yet it is obvious to every thinking mind that the Bible in the hands of the church is the standard weight by which all questionable or spurious coins can be detected.

In this I don't want to be misunderstood as was Brother Cassel in "Optimism vs. Pessimism." For any man who half knows his Bible knows that Brother Cassel struck the right cord on the Bible harp string, if he did play a little out of tune in certain measures, or between "bars". My business is to save men, or to labor with that element that Jesus calls "The salt of the earth", having for its object the salvation of mankind who apply the remedy. Bishop Fowler recently said in his charge to young ministers, "Business common sense is what we need in the church just as much as in any other walk of life. Give me a man with religion and no common sense and a man with common sense and no religion as candidates, and I will choose the man with common sense every time, for if a man has common sense he's bound to get the religion in time."

This advice is no doubt risky but if there were no applicants for the ministry blessed with both qualities, possibly the Bishop is right.

Uncompromising as I am, and am known to be on the subject of "creeds" yet more and more am I convinced of the need of the church defining herself, and putting herself on record as to a medium standard of eligibility to the ministry at least. Can we be expected to turn out ministers from the church thru the colleges with the understanding that they are to preach what they please just so they say the Bible is their "creed?" Our G. B. Brethren are reaping a harvest from their own sowing in the past, by trying to pump "nonconformity on one hand and conformity on the clothes line on the other, and to a great extent neglected to teach transformation by the renewing of their minds until Phil. 1: 27 be fulfilled. "Whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand steadfast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Some of their brightest young men have been side-tracked by inroads made by hobbyriders who have visited the camp and side-tracked many. I have in my mind now one of their churches being ruined by "fadists." A brother minister in one of our popular denominations remarked in conversation with the writer, "Among the twenty graduates from our seminary last June, only fourteen have good common sense." Such preachers are bound to give their church